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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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HC stays action against CM in MUDA scam till 29 Aug

HC says no action against CM until pleas against Guv heard

BENGALURU, 19 AUG

High Court on Monday asked the trial concerned not to take any precipitative action against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah based on the Governor's sanction in MUDA 'scam', till the next date of hearing before the High Court.

A bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna posted the plea for hearing on 29 August which was filed by Siddaramaiah challenging the sanction for his prosecution by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot in the alleged Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) land allotment scam.

High Court said proceedings before trial court shall be deferred till the next date of hearing before the High Court.

In its order, the bench stated, "It was argued that the proceedings before the trial court are up for orders on whether a sanction should be granted to prosecute the Chief Minister. Any order permitting action to proceed further against the Chief Minister, would frustrate the proceedings before this court. Since the proceedings are pending before this court, the trial court shall defer its proceedings till the next date of hearing. There shall be no precipitative action qua these complaints."

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Siddaramaiah, argued that Governor didn't give a single reason on merits why the sanction ought to be given for prosecution of Chief Minister.

Singhvi said that the Governor is bound by a Cabinet decision in such cases, however, he issued sanction in a short two-page order without considering the merits of the case. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Governor submitted that in such cases there only needs to be an apprehension or suspicion of reasonable bias by the Cabinet in favour of the minister against whom sanction is sought. Earlier, a complaint was filed by social activist Snehamayi Krishna against Siddaramaiah and nine others for allegedly forging documents to claim compensation from the Mysuru Urban Development Authority.

—ANI

Congress leaders protest against Governor Thawarchand Gehlot and BJP at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Slugfest erupts over Guv's nod for probe

Workers of Congress and BJP took to the streets in Karnataka on Monday over Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot giving sanction for an investigation against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in connection with alleged irregularities in land allotment by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA). Congress leaders and workers staged dharnas, foot marches and rallies in district headquarters, holding placards denouncing the action and raising slogans against the Governor.

>>>More on Page 2

KOLKATA HORROR

WB docs march to police HQ after notice over posts

Junior doctors participate in a sit in-protest against the rape and murder of a doctor, in Kolkata, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

KOLKATA, 19 AUG

Senior doctors Kunal Sarkar and Subarna Goswami appeared before the police on Monday afternoon in posts they shared on social media over the alleged rape and murder of a doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

Sarkar and Goswami reached the Kolkata Police headquarters at Lal Bazar leading a march of doctors. The procession that began at the Medical College, Calcutta, was stopped by the police near Phears Lane-BB Ganguly Street Crossing, and the two doctors were escorted to the police headquarters by senior officers. They were asked by the police to appear before it for the posts.

Sarkar and Goswami were accused by the police of spreading misinformation and disclosing the identity of the post-graduate trainee doctor who was allegedly raped and killed while on duty at the hospital.

—PTI

TMC MP MOVES HC AGAINST KOLKATA POLICE NOTICE

KOLKATA, 19 AUG

Trinamool Congress MP Sukhendu Sekhar Roy on Monday moved the Calcutta High Court, challenging a notice sent to him by the police in a post he made over the rape and murder of a doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The police served the notice to him on Sunday, asking him to appear before it. The court will hear the petition on Tuesday.

In his post, the TMC MP demanded that the CBI undertake "custodial interrogation" of police commissioner and previous principal of RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

—PTI

>>>More on Page 4

Modi to visit Ukraine on 23 August

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Kyiv, India on Monday said it is willing to contribute in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine. Modi will visit the Ukrainian capital on 23 August to hold talks with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. India has always been advocating diplomacy and dialogue to resolve the conflict in Ukraine, Tanmaya Lal, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), said at a media briefing. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine will form a part of discussions, he said. India has independent ties with both Russia and Ukraine, Lal said replying to a question. Modi will travel to Poland before visiting Ukraine.

—PTI

Nepal to export 1,000 MW electricity to India

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Nepal will export close to 1,000 megawatt of electricity to India, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday after holding comprehensive talks with his Nepalese counterpart Arzu Rana Deuba. Jaishankar described Nepal's decision to export the electricity to India as a "new milestone". In their talks, the two Ministers also focused on boosting cooperation in areas of trade, connectivity and infrastructure.

Deuba began her five-day trip to India on Sunday in her first official trip abroad after assuming the responsibility.

—PTI

Udaipur boy who was stabbed by student succumbs

JAIPUR, 19 AUG

After battling for life for four days, a 15-year-old boy, whose stabbing by a fellow student sparked communal violence in Udaipur, succumbed to injuries on Monday. Sometime before the boy breathed his last, his sister tied rakhi on his wrist in the hospital on Raksha Bandhan, Udaipur Collector Arvind Poswal said. Elaborate security arrangements are in place in the city and mobile internet services are suspended in the wake of the communal violence on Friday, police said. Inspector General of Police (Udaipur) Ajaypal Lamba said that the boy died during treatment on Monday and the body has been shifted to mortuary. ***—PTI***

BODY COVERED IN INJURIES

Man kidnaps ragpicker's 3-yr-old child, rapes her in Rajasthan

JODHPUR, 19 AUG

A three-year-old girl sleeping outside the temple with mother, a ragpicker, was kidnapped and abducted by a 45-year-old man in Jodhpur, Rajasthan on Sunday.

She was found with injury and bite marks on her body and her medical examination confirmed rape. The accused, Harish Sindhi, a tea stall worker was arrested. He was drunk while committing the crime revealed police sources.

The victim was discovered by a woman while setting up her stall around 6.30 am, on Sunday. She was wrapped in a stole and had bruises and bite marks on her lips and back.

Rajesh Kumar Yadav, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West), said the girl's family lives in a slum in Madhya Pradesh.

The child's father works as a ragpicker and the mother suffers from mental health issues, she also has a 5-year-old brother.

PHOTO: PTI

Girl raped in TN NCC camp

An eighth standard girl student was allegedly sexually assaulted and 13 others sexually abused at a fake National Cadet Corps (NCC) camp at Bargur in the district and 11 people including the prime suspect have been arrested, Krishnagiri. The NCC headquarters stated that it did not conduct any NCC camp in that area and that the persons involved in the reported incident of sexual harassment of school girls attending the said camp have no connection with the NCC. About 41 students, including 17 girls, participated in the NCC camp and the incident came to light after she narrated the trauma to her parents.

—Salar with agencies

GOVT SOUNDS ALERTS AT AIRPORTS OVER MPOX SCARE

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

The Union Health Ministry has asked all airports as well as authorities at land ports on borders with Bangladesh and Pakistan to remain alert about incoming international passengers reporting Mpox symptoms, official sources said on Sunday.

The ministry has identified three Centre-run hospitals -- Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, Safdarjung and Lady Hardinge -- as nodal centres in the national capital for isolation, management and treatment of any patient with Mpox.

All state governments have been asked to identify such designated hospitals under their jurisdiction, the sources said.

PK Mishra, the principal secretary to the Prime Minister, chaired a high-level meeting on Sunday to review the country's preparedness for Mpox amid enhanced surveillance for prompt detection.

Officials said there is no reported case of Mpox in the country as of now. As per the current assessment, the risk of a large outbreak with sustained transmission is low, they said.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared Mpox a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) in view of its prevalence and spread across many parts of Africa. *—PTI*

1 arrested for issuing threat to Mamata

Kolkata, 19 Aug

A person was arrested in Kolkata for allegedly disclosing the identity on social media of the doctor who was raped and murdered at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, and issuing threats to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, police said on Monday. The arrest was made after a complaint was lodged at the Taltala police station, they added.

> **Those who are attacking Mamata Banerjee, pointing fingers at her, and demanding her resignation will never succeed. Those pointing fingers at Mamata Banerjee will be broken and crushed**
>
> -Udayan Guha, TMC minister

> **No results have come out of the inquiry that is being done. We hope we will get results... No one from the department or the college cooperated with us... There were three bodies at the crematorium but our daughter's body was cremated first...The CM is talking about providing justice, but then attempts are being made to put the common people demanding justice in jail**
>
> -Father of Kolkata rape victim

CRPF INSPECTOR KILLED IN UDHAMPUR TERROR ATTACK

JAMMU, 19 AUG

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) inspector was killed when the terrorists opened fire on a patrol party in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Monday, officials said. The CRPF along with the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the local police was fired upon by the terrorists around 3.30 pm in the remote Chill area under Dudu Police Station jurisdiction of Basantgarh, the officials said.

CRPF Inspector Kuldip, belonging to the G company of the 187th battalion, was hit by a bullet and later succumbed to his injuries while being taken to the hospital, they said. The Udhampur Police posted information about this incident on its official X handle. The terrorists fled the scene in the face of strong retaliation by the joint patrolling party, the officials said, adding reinforcements have been rushed to the scene and a search operation has been launched to track down and neutralise the militants.

—PTI

RAKSHA BANDHAN

Women tie rakhi on wrists of Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan festival at the India-Pakistan Attari-Wagah Border post, about 35km from Amritsar, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

HEMA COMMITTEE REPORT

'Ker actresses sexually harassed'

T'PURAM, 19 AUG

Justice Hema Committee report released on Monday sheds light on the widespread and persistent sexual harassment faced by women in the Malayalam cinema industry, with many alleging they were subjected to unwanted advances even before commencing work.

The report highlighted the widespread nature of the issue, sparking concerns about the safety and well-being of female professionals in the industry. The much-awaited report of the Justice Hema Committee, the government appointed panel in 2019 that studied issues faced by women in the Malayalam film industry, comprises explosive accounts of harassment, exploitation, and ill-treatment being faced by women.

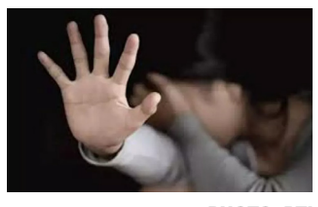


PHOTO: PTI

The copy of the report was given to the media under the RTI Act after five years of its submission to the government. In a series of shocking and shameful revelations, the report stated that female actors faced harassment, including instances where the doors of their rooms were knocked on by intoxicated individuals in the film industry. Many of them, who suffered sexual harassment, were reluctant to complain about this to the police due to fear, it said. As per the report, submitted by the three-member panel, the major issue which women face in the film industry is sexual harassment.

The women actors who are ready to compromise are given code names, and those who are not ready to compromise are pushed out of the field, as per the report. *—PTI*

KERALA MAN DIES IN RUSSIA WAR

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

A man who hails from Kerala was killed in a shell attack launched by Ukraine late Sunday night. The deceased, Sandeep, 36, an electrician by profession had flown to Russia to work at a restaurant.

Later, he got a job at a Russian military canteen, where his brother was posted on X. The family said they had lost contact with Sandeep recently.

Sandeep's family has filed complaints with the Union Ministers Suresh Gopi, S Jaishankar, and George Kurian. The family is seeking assistance from the Indian embassy in Russia through Non-Resident Keralite's Affairs. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

3 arrested for teacher's murder in Kolar

KOLAR, 19 AUG

Police arrested three people in the murder of Divyashree, a teacher, on 14 August, at her house in Muthyalpet, Mulbagal, Kolar. Kolar Superintendent of Police B Nikhil told reporters on Monday that the accused are Ranjith, 20, a resident of Tirumanahalli; Avani hobli, KV Yuvaraj, 18, a degree student from Kondenahalli, Avani hobli; and Shahid Pasha, 18, from Nangali in Mulbagal taluk. Ranjith, who previously supplied drinking water cans to the victim's house, had hatched a plan to rob the residence, believing it to contain a substantial amount of cash and jewellery. He involved his friends, Yuvaraj and Pasha, in the crime. Taking advantage of a power outage, the trio entered Divyashree's house and murdered her by slitting her throat. The victim's daughter, who was on the first floor, was alerted by her mother's screams and managed to lock herself in a room, thwarting the assailants' attempt to harm her. The accused fled the scene without stealing anything. The police, with the help of CCTV footage, were able to identify and arrest the culprits within four days.

—SALAR NEWS

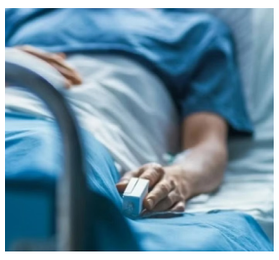


PHOTO: PTI

19 hospitalised after inhaling rat repellent in hostel

BENGALURU, 19 AUG

As many as 19 students of Bengaluru's Adarsh Nursing College student hostel were taken to the hospital after they faced breathing problems because of the rat repellent that was sprayed by the hostel management, on the night of August 18, officials said on Monday. According to police, three of the 19 students are seriously ill and are shifted to the ICU. "Almost all the students have received treatment in the hospitals and are healthy, among them three students named Jayan Varghese, Dileesh and Jo Mon are seriously ill and are being admitted to the ICU," officials said. A case will be registered under section 286 BNS against the hostel management staff who sprinkled rat poison, he added.

—ANI

MUDA scam: Cong, BJP take to the streets

Congress protests against Governor's order to prosecute CM; BJP seeks CM's resignation

DyCM Shivakumar and other Cong leaders protest against Governor Thawarchand Gehlot and BJP leaders at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Monday; BJP President BY Vijayendra with party leader R Ashoka and others during a protest against state Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the alleged MUDA scam, near Mahatma Gandhi's statue at Vidhana Soudha

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

BENGALURU, 19 AUG

Workers of ruling Congress and BJP took to the streets in Karnataka on Monday over Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot giving sanction for an investigation against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in connection with alleged irregularities in land allotment by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

Congress leaders and workers staged dharnas, foot marches and rallies in district headquarters, holding placards denouncing the action and raising slogans against the Governor. BJP leaders staged a protest in Bengaluru seeking the Chief Minister's resignation.

Demonstrations were held in Bengaluru, Udupi, Mangaluru, Hubballi-Dharwad, Vijayapura, Kalaburagi, Raichur, Tumakuru and Mysuru. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who is also the State Congress Chief, led the protests at Freedom Park here with ministers of the Siddaramaiah Cabinet in attendance in what appeared to be a show of strength. "The Governor is making a case out of nothing. This is a murder of democracy and we will protest it," Shivakumar had said on Sunday.

Shivakumar criticised the Governor for not taking any action against Janata Dal (Secular) leader HD Kumaraswamy, whom he referred to as the "Fake Swami of Navarangi (nine colours of fake drama)" The Congress government will be in power for the next 10 years, and we will not budge or bend."

Shivakumar asked why the Lokayukta has not been granted permission to investigate BJP leaders like Shashikala Annasaheb Jolle, Murugesh Nirani and Janardhana Reddy." The BJP, led by its State Chief BY Vijayendra and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka, held a dharna near Mahatma Gandhi's statue on the premises of Vidhana Soudha, which houses the Legislature and Secretariat, demanding the Chief Minister's resignation.

BJP leaders said Siddaramaiah has no moral right to continue as Chief Minister and he should quit to pave the way for a transparent and unbiased investigation. Former chief minister DV Sadananda Gowda was among those who took part in the dharna. In Mysuru, district in-charge minister HC Mahadevappa led a rally of Congress activists in support of Siddaramaiah. The workers held a dharna at Gandhi Square and marched to DC Office in Siddhartha Nagar, around 3km away leading to a traffic block in the city. Mahadevappa accused the BJP-led NDA government of destabilising non-BJP-ruled governments by misusing Governors' office.

Animal Husbandry Minister K Venkatesh led the protests in Chamarajnagar, while Agriculture Minister N Cheluvarayaswamy led the agitation in Mandya. They submitted memorandums to President through Deputy Commissioners.

A bandh called by Congress received mixed response in T Narasipura, Varuna Assembly segment. *—PTI & Salar News*

'Oppn trying to destabilise govt'

Following sanction by Governor to prosecute Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in MUDA land scam case, Congress leader KC Venugopal alleged that it was an attempt by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Janata Dal (Secular) to destabilise the State government. Venugopal said, "Their [BJP-JD(S)] target is clear to tarnish the image of Siddaramaiah. Congress is standing with Siddaramaiah and the party will fight with this issue legally and politically," he said. *—ANI*

PHOTO: SALAR

KURUBARA SANGHA PREZ COLLAPSES, DIES DURING MEET

BENGALURU, 19 AUG

President of the Kurubara Sangha from Kolar CK Ravichandran succumbed to a heart attack while addressing a press conference on Monday. The gathering was convened to protest Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's decision to sanction the prosecution of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

He was immediately rushed to Fortis Hospital on Cunningham Road, but was declared dead on arrival.

A prominent figure from Channasandra, Ravichandran joined Congress six months ago under the mentorship of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar.

—Salar News

I get more 'josh' during political battles: CM

BENGALURU, 19 AUG

Siddaramaiah ***PHOTO: PTI***

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said his energy gets pumped up during political battles as he appeared unfazed by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's order giving sanction for investigation against him in connection with irregularities in the allotment of alternative sites by Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

"My conscience is clear," declared Siddaramaiah, hours after filing a writ petition in the High Court challenging the order, adding, Supreme Court lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi would argue his case in the HC. "I have faith in the judiciary. I have total confidence in getting relief from court because I have not committed any wrong," he said here.

The Chief Minister recalled that he first became a minister 40 years ago -- on 17 August, 1984 -- and there has not been a "single black spot" in his political career. "My political life is an open book. Using Raj Bhavan, BJP and JD(S) have hatched a conspiracy to tarnish my image," Siddaramaiah said.

Siddaramaiah said the Opposition in the State is under an illusion that if he is finished politically, the entire Congress will also "get finished". "It (their game plan) will not be realised."

Meanwhile, Siddaramaiah criticised Opposition Leader R Ashoka for his comments comparing the current situation with former CM BS Yediyurappa's resignation in 2011. Siddaramaiah accused Ashoka of "demonstrating ignorance" by referencing Yediyurappa's resignation, which followed an investigation report on illegal mining, not merely the Governor's sanction for prosecution.

LoP R Ashoka had demanded CM Siddaramaiah's resignation, comparing the situation to when BS Yediyurappa faced a similar investigation in 2011, based on a private complaint during his tenure. *—Agencies*

FROZEN MEMORIES

CM Siddaramaiah sees a picture taken by Salar News Chief Photographer Mohammed Asad at 'Frozen Memories 2024', a three day annual photo exhibition organised by the Photo Journalists Association of Bengaluru, at Chitrakala Parishath

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

IN HSR LAYOUT

Choreographer arrested for sexual assault of student

BENGALURU, 19 AUG

A 24-year-old choreographer from Tamil Nadu was arrested on Sunday for allegedly sexually assaulting a 21-year-old college student at HSR Layout in Bengaluru.

The accused, Mukeshwaran, was apprehended at his home in Adugodi after CCTV footage and statements from the victim and her friends linked him to the crime.

The assault occurred when the victim, a Bachelor of Computer Applications student from Nagaland, was hitchhiking home to Chandapura after attending a party in Koramangala. Mukeshwaran offered her a ride but diverted the route to a secluded area near a truck parking zone in HSR Layout, where the assault took place.

The victim managed to send a distress message to her friends, who tracked her location and found her behind a parked truck. "Mukeshwaran fled the scene when her friends arrived. The victim, who resisted the attack, had left visible scratch marks on his face, which helped her friends identify him," Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Southeast, Sara Fathima, told Salar News.

The victim sent a distress message to her friends ***PHOTO: PTI***

- Mukeshwaran had been residing in Bengaluru for a few years and worked as a dance teacher at a local school, in addition to his choreography work, according to reports.

"We recorded statements from the victim and friends. We traced him through his bike's registration number found in CCTV footage on Hosur Main Road. He does not face any prior criminal charges and we are seeking one week of police custody for further questioning," DCP Fathima said. The victim is undergoing treatment at a hospital in the City.

Mukeshwaran had been residing in Bengaluru for a few years and worked as a dance teacher at a local school, in addition to his choreography work, according to reports. *—Salar News*

Renukaswamy murder case: Pavithra applies for bail

BENGALURU, 19 AUG

Pavithra Gowda, the main accused in Renukaswamy murder case, applied for bail in a Civil Court in Bengaluru on Monday. The court will take up the application on Thursday.

Pavitra, a Chitradurga native and alleged girlfriend of Kannada actor Darshan, has been in judicial custody since her arrest on 11 June. She is lodged in Parappana Agrahara Jail, along with Darshan, who is also implicated in the case as the second accused. A total of 17 individuals are involved in the case, with police collecting more than 200 pieces of evidence during their investigation.

According to police sources, 33-year-old Renukaswamy, a fan of the actor, had sent obscene messages to Gowda, which enraged Darshan, allegedly leading to his murder. His body was found near a stormwater drain next to an apartment in Sumanahalli here on 9 June.

Raghavendra, one of the accused who is part of Darshan's fan club in Chitradurga, had brought Renukaswamy to a shed in R R Nagar here, on the pretext that the actor wanted to meet him. It was in this shed that he was allegedly tortured and murdered. According to the post-mortem report, Renukaswamy, a native of Chitradurga, died due to shock and haemorrhage as a result of multiple blunt injuries. Police sources said Pavithra, who is accused number one, was the "major cause" for Renukaswamy's murder, claiming that it has been proved from the probe that she instigated other accused, conspired with them, and took part in it. *—Salar News*

FOR SIGNALLING TESTS

Metro services to hit snag on Green Line

BENGALURU, 19 AUG

Commuters on the Green Line of Bengaluru Metro are in for some disruptions as the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) announced the suspension of train services between Peenya Industry and Nagasandra stations on multiple dates in August and September.

This is to facilitate signalling tests on the newly extended stretch from Nagasandra to Madawara. These tests are a vital step towards the inauguration of commercial operations on the 3.14km elevated corridor, connecting the Green Line to the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC).

BMRCL has urged passengers to plan their journeys accordingly

PHOTO: PTI

- The affected dates include 20, 23, 30 August, 6, and 1, September.

The affected dates include 20, 23, 30 August, 6, and 1, September. Additionally, there will be altered timings on 24 and 25 August. The last train from Nagasandra to Peenya Industry on 24 August will depart at 10pm instead of 11pm, while the first train on 25 August will start at 6am, an hour later than the regular schedule.

BMRCL has urged passengers to plan their journeys accordingly, as no metro services will be available between Peenya Industry and Nagasandra on the specified dates. The Purple Line, however, will operate as usual.

—Salar News

NIA chargesheets 2 more terror suspects from Shivamogga in ISIS module case

BENGALURU, 19 AUG

National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a charge sheet against two terrorists in Al-Hind ISIS module case in Karnataka.

The accused, Abdul Matheen Taha and Mussavir Hussain Shazib, both residents of Thirthahalli in Shivamogga district, were involved in a terror conspiracy involving targeted killings and other jihadi activities. With this filing, the total number of accused charged in the case has risen to 18.

The chargesheet, filed as the second supplementary document in the case (RC-04/2020/NIA/DLI), includes sections of Indian Penal Code and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

PHOTO: PTI

- The duo had been absconding until their arrest on 12 April, 2024. NIA investigations reveal that Taha was self-radicalised and subsequently radicalised Shazib and others.

The duo had been absconding until their arrest on 12 April, 2024. NIA investigations reveal that Taha was self-radicalised and subsequently radicalised Shazib and others. with Mehaboob Pasha.

Pasha, based in Gurupanapallaya, Bengaluru, had formed Al-Hind Trust with his family members. The trust was instrumental in promoting ISIS activities in India, with Pasha also passing on a handler link to Khaja Mohideen, who joined Al-Hind Trust to further ISIS' agenda.

—Salar News

PHOTO: PTI

Stalin flags 'reduction' in fund grant for rly projects

CHENNAI 19 AUG

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Monday expressed "disappointment" over the reduction in central funds for railway projects in the state and said the move would drastically affect TN's progress. Taking up the issue with Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, regarding reduction in allocation of funds for Southern Railways in the regular railway Budget 2024-2025, he sought the Minister's intervention to ensure allocation of adequate funds earmarked for new lines, doubling and customer amenities projects in Tamil Nadu. "I reiterate that these vital projects should not be delayed further due to shortage of funds. I look forward to your personal intervention in this regard," Stalin said in a letter addressed to the Central Minister. —*PTI*

BRS opposes move to install Rajiv Gandhi statue

HYDERABAD, 19 AUG

Taking exception to a reported proposal of the ruling Congress in Telangana to instal a statue of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi in front of the state Secretariat complex here, BRS working president KT Rama Rao on Monday said his party would remove the statue when it comes to power. The previous BRS government had planned to instal a statue of 'Telangana Thalli' (mother) at the location, he said. "... in four years, our government will be formed again in Telangana under the leadership of KCR. Soon after its formation, we will definitely remove the statue of Rajiv Gandhi ji from there with all due courtesy. We will install it in a new location wherever Congressmen wants," Rao told reporters. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X@Chief_Secy_TN

N Muruganandam is TN's new Chief Secretary

CHENNAI 19 AUG

The Tamil Nadu government on Monday appointed N Muruganandam as the new State Chief Secretary, replacing Shiv Das Meena. Meena, due to retire in October this year, has been transferred to the Tamil Nadu Real Estate Regulatory Authority as its chairman. Muruganandam, a senior bureaucrat, had served as secretary to industries and finance departments. His last posting was Additional Chief Secretary / Secretary I to the Chief Minister. —*PTI*

Upendra to file nominations for RS bypoll

PATNA, 19 AUG

Former Union minister Upendra Kushwaha, an NDA ally in Bihar, announced on Monday that he will be filing nomination papers later this week for the Rajya Sabha by-poll. Kushwaha, who heads the Rashtriya Lok Morcha, made the announcement on X, disclosing that he has deferred to 21 August filing nomination papers which he had planned for a day earlier. Notably, by-polls are due for two Rajya Sabha seats in Bihar which have fallen vacant upon election to the Lok Sabha of BJP's Vivek Thakur and RJD's Misa Bharti. As per the NDA's seat-sharing formula for Bihar in the Lok Sabha polls, Kushwaha's party was to get a seat in Parliament and another berth in the State Legislative Council. Incidentally, the filing of nomination papers for the two seats will come to a close on 21 August. —*PTI*

NC PROMISES TO RESTORE ART 370

In its manifesto, party makes 12 promises including free education

National Conference Vice President Omer Abdullah releases party manifesto with party leaders at a press conference, in Srinagar on Monday PHOTO: PTI

SRINAGAR, 19 AUG

Ahead of Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir, to be held from 18 September, the National Conference on Monday launched its Manifesto that promised 12 guarantees to the people of the Union Territory.

The party's Vice President Omar Abdullah launched the manifesto that includes some huge promises like- restoration of Article 370, 35-A and statehood, redrawing the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 and return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits.

The first guarantee of the NC's manifesto envisage the restoration of political and legal status of the Union Territory and said that the party would strive to restore Article 370-35A and statehood prior to 5 August, 2019.

"The party has also said that in the first Assembly session, they will bring a resolution against the Centre's decision to strip the region of its statehood and special status," the manifesto said.

The second guarantee includes several promises including- the release of political prisoners, return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits, simplified job verification process, ease of passport verification, and end to unjust terminations and unnecessary harassment to people on highways will be stopped.

The third guarantee will be a comprehensive job package for youth. Abdullah said, "We all know the unemployment condition in J&K. There was fraud in the recruitment process and the youths did not get the job." The party has promised to give free electricity upto 200 units.

He further added, "Regarding social welfare, we are making a special guarantee to the people. Under this, women belonging to the EWS (Economically Weaker Section) will be given Rs 5,000 per month to support them."

"Regarding drugs, we have consistently stated that a comprehensive programme needs to be created to address this issue. In the war against drugs, we are making a guarantee to the people," Omar said.

The party said they will provide 10 kgs of rice/atta per person each month, and working towards establishing a Minority Commission.

The poll document promised to grant industry status to the tourism sector and explore new tourist destinations in Jammu and Kashmir, including in Pir Panjal, Chenab, and other areas. The party has also mentioned establishing a medical trust that will help people fight against serious diseases like cancer.

—*ANI/PTI*

Cong open to strike alliance for J&K polls, says Tariq Karra

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Congress is open to talks with like-minded parties to strike a "respectable alliance" for the Jammu and Kashmir assembly polls but the parameters for such a tie-up would be different from the Lok Sabha elections, party's newly-appointed J&K chief Tariq Hameed Karra said on Monday. In an interview with PTI, Karra also said Ghulam Nabi Azad's Democratic Progressive Azad Party has been "outrightly rejected" by the people who have "punished" the outfit for the "idea of leaving Congress". —*PTI*

12 PROMISES

- Restoration of Article 370 and 35 A
- Repeal Public Safety Act
- Committed to dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits
- Provide 1 lakh jobs to youth
- Release Political prisoners
- Unnecessary harassment to people on Highways will be stopped
- End to unjust terminations
- Provide 6 cylinders free of cost to EWS
- Women entitled to free travel in all public transport
- Reinstate free education up to the university level
- Increase the medical allowance of pe sioners to Rs 1,000 from Rs 300
- Minority commission to be established

PHOTO: PTI

INDIA MIGHT FACE CIVIL WAR, SAYS VIJAYVARGIYA

INDORE, 19 AUG

Madhya Pradesh minister and BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya courted controversy by claiming India could face civil war in 30 years time due to largescale demographic changes.

The statement was condemned by the Opposition Congress, which called it irresponsible and said Vijayvargiya must immediately apologise. Addressing a Raksha Bandhan programme here on Sunday, Vijayvargiya said, "Social harmony is very important for the present time. Recently, I was talking to a retired military officer who is very active in social work. He said the way our country's demography is changing, a civil war will start after 30 years. Such a situation may arise that you people will not be able to live."

Some people want to divide Hindus on caste lines so that they can achieve power using the British policy of 'divide and rule', he claimed.

Criticising him, MP Congress spokesperson Neelabh Shukla said, "Vijayvargiya's statement is completely irresponsible. This is a statement that creates an atmosphere of instability and fear in the country. It raises questions on peace and brotherhood. He should publicly apologise." Vijayvargiya should identify the retired army officer and also tell us why the latter has this apprehension of civil war, Shukla said. —*PTI*

RAKSHA BANDHAN

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi shares a photo of himself with his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan; School students tie rakhi to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday

PHOTOS: X@RAHULGANDHI/PTI

Lateral entry is attack on Dalits, OBCs, adivasis: Rahul

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Upping the ante over the lateral entry issue, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday called it an attack on Dalits, OBCs and adivasis, and accused BJP of seeking to snatch reservations from 'bahujans'.

Congress has strongly criticised the government after the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Saturday issued a notification for recruiting 45 joint secretaries, directors and deputy secretaries through lateral entry-referred to as the appointment of specialists (including those from the private sector) in government departments.

Oppositions on Sunday slammed the move to hire public servants through lateral entry, claiming it will snatch reservations from SCs, STs and OBCs, but BJP hit back stating the NDA government was bringing transparency to this mode of recruitment started by the Congress-led UPA. Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) also alleged that it was a "conspiracy" by BJP to appoint its ideological allies to high posts through the back door.

Gandhi also highlighted the plight of gig workers and asserted that Congress governments in states would make concrete policies to solve their problems while INDIA bloc would strive for ensuring their nationwide implementation.

PTI

PHOTO: PTI

"Reservation provisions must be there in any government appointment. There are no ifs and buts in this. No reservation exists in the private sector and if it is not implemented in government positions as well... The information came up before me on Sunday and it is a matter of concern for me

-Chirag Paswan, BJP ally

'No talk yet with Champai on him joining BJP'

RANCHI, 19 AUG

Champai Soren Jharkhand BJP President Babulal Marandi on Monday said that no talk was held yet with Champai regarding his joining the saffron party.

Marandi said that Champai is a seasoned politician and he would himself decide his own path. Amid speculation about a potential switch to the BJP, Champai reached Delhi on Sunday afternoon.

Later in a social media post, Champai said that he experienced "bitter humiliation" as chief minister, which compelled him to seek an alternative path.

Mentioning Champai's post, he said, "It indicates that he was deeply hurt. He felt humiliated the way he was removed from the CM's post." Champai highlighted in the post that he had been asked to resign during the meeting of party legislators on July 3. He was taken aback, as his self-respect was hurt. The ex-CM said he had announced in the meeting, "a new chapter in my life is going to begin from today".

He further said he had three options. First to retire from politics, second to float a separate outfit, and third, if find any ally, to carry forward with them. "From that day until now, and through the upcoming Jharkhand Assembly elections, all options are open for me in this journey," Champai said.

Speaking over chief minister Hemant Soren's allegation that BJP poaches MLAs, Marandi said, "It means he (Hemant) is saying his MLAs are 'Bikao' (ready to be sold). If you term all MLAs as 'Bikao', who will want to stay with you (CM). If any MLA expresses his grief, you (CM) should listen to him," Marandi said.

Jharkhand BJP spokesperson Pratul Shadeo said that if Champai expresses willingness to join BJP, then the party leadership would take a decision. —*PTI*

- Later in a social media post, Champai said that he experienced "bitter humiliation" as chief minister, which compelled him to seek an alternative path

Champai Soren PHOTO: PTI

Singhvi files nomination for RS seat from T'gana

Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi PHOTO: ANI

HYDERABAD, 19 AUG

Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi on Monday filed his nomination as the party candidate for the upcoming Rajya Sabha bypoll from Telangana.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, his ministerial colleagues, AICC incharge of party affairs in Telangana Deepa Das Munsi accompanied Singhvi when he submitted his nomination to the officials in the state legislative assembly.

The ruling Congress Legislature Party (CLP) in Telangana on Sunday night endorsed the candidature of Singhvi for the Rajya Sabha bypoll.

Addressing reporters after a meeting of the CLP here on Sunday, Chief Minister and state Congress president Revanth Reddy said Singhvi was introduced to Congress MLAs, MPs and MLCs at the meeting.

Referring to the disputes with neighbouring Andhra Pradesh following its bifurcation in 2014, Revanth Reddy said Singhvi's election would help in highlighting Telangana's concerns and problems not only in Parliament but also in courts.

Rao had expressed confidence that the by-election would be unanimous in view of the majority of the ruling Congress in Telangana and said Singhvi would be introduced to the party MLAs.

The strength of Congress in the 119-member Telangana Legislative Assembly is 65. About 10 MLAs of the BRS have joined the ruling Congress since the assembly elections last year. The BRS has sought their disqualification. —*PTI*

AMID B'DESH TURMOIL

Security in NE a concern, says Think Tank

GUWAHATI, 19 AUG

Former foreign secretary Harshvardan Shringla has said that India needs to engage with those in power now in Bangladesh, as instability in the neighbouring country has a direct impact on the security scenario of the Northeastern region.

Shringla said this at a programme in which a report on policy options for India in dealing with the current Bangladesh situation was released.

The report, to be submitted to the Centre, was prepared by a think tank Society to Harmonise Aspirations for Responsible Engagement (SHARE).

The political instability in Bangladesh has direct repercussions both on security and developmental projects in North East India, security and defence experts, who are members of SHARE, said at the event.

"We have two core concerns - Bangladesh's territory not be used in any manner inimical to its (India's) interests and ensuring the safety of Hindus and other minorities in the neighbouring country," the former ambassador to Bangladesh said.

The report will submitted to the Prime Minister's Office and the National Security Advisor for implementation, former Eastern Command GOC-in-C Lt Gen R P Kalita (Retd) said at the event.

Assam Chief Information Commissioner Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, highlighting the recommendations, said dialogue with all stakeholders is in India's core interests, especially with regard to tackling a possible refugee crisis in the Northeast which has a border of 1885 kms with Bangladesh.

The report has pointed out that such connectivity exposes Northeast India to potential security concerns as these portals may be misused by anti-India elements to enter the region and wreak havoc. —*PTI*

Harshvardan Shringla PHOTO: PTI

- The report will submitted to the Prime Minister's Office and the National Security Advisor for implementation, former Eastern Command GOC-in-C Lt Gen RP Kalita said

Bengal hospitals crippled amid docs' protests

Heavy rush was seen at the OPDs as senior doctors substituted for their juniors to handle the situation

Lawyers of Calcutta High Court stage a protest against alleged sexual assault and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor in Kolkata on Monday PHOTO: PTI

KOLKATA, 19 AUG

Healthcare services remained affected at state-run hospitals in West Bengal on Monday as junior doctors continued their cease-work protest again the rape and murder of a colleague at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital.

Heavy rush was seen at the out-patient departments on the first day of the week with senior doctors substituting for their juniors to handle the situation.

"This protest is for seeking justice for a female doctor who faced brutality while treating patients for 36 hours at a stretch. It is the 11th day that her body was discovered, but where is the justice? We will continue this stir until we get justice for our sister," said an agitating doctor at the RG Kar MCH.

Lawyers join protest

Lawyers practising at the Calcutta High Court marched in a procession on Monday demanding justice and "punishment to the real culprits".

Several senior lawyers, including former West Bengal Advocate General Jayanta Mitra, joined the protest march.

The lawyers, carrying placards and festoons demanding "punishment to the real culprits" walked in the rally near the high court during the lunch recess. Mitra described the alleged rape and gruesome murder of the postgraduate trainee doctor in the hospital on 9 August as "a crying shame for the entire Bengali community." —PTI

CBI grills RG Kar ex-principal for 4th day in a row

KOLKATA, 19 AUG

CBI officers for the fourth consecutive day on Monday questioned the former principal of RG Kar Medical College, Sandip Ghosh in their probe into the rape and murder of a woman doctor.

Ghosh reached the CBI's city office at CGO Complex on Monday morning, an official said. Ghosh was asked to specify his role after getting the news of the death of the doctor, who he had contacted and why he made the parents wait for nearly three hours, he said. The ex-principal was also questioned who had ordered the renovation of the rooms near the seminar hall at the emergency building of the hospital after the incident.

Ghosh has been questioned for several hours in the last three days since Friday by the CBI officers. The officers of the central probe agency are also checking his mobile phone call list details as well as his WhatsApp chat list. —PTI

'Cops acting against fake news'

Kolkata, 19 Aug

Senior Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh on Monday said police are taking action against only those people who are posting on social media wrong information, fake audio and disclosing the name of the doctor raped and murdered in RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. Ghosh said people can protest but in a proper manner. "If you think you will protest, do it a hundred times in proper language. Do it a thousand times," he said. —PTI

Himanta meets WB Guv, hails him

Guwahati, 19 Aug

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose and lauded him for his role in upholding the principles of the Constitution in "very adversarial circumstances". Sarma called upon Bose in Guwahati on Sunday. A video featured both exchanging scarves and books and then sitting down for a conversation. The Governor and Himanta had discussions over the ongoing situation in West Bengal —PTI

A woman police personnel ties rakhi to junior doctors on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan festival during their sit in-protest PHOTO: PTI

"Bengal is not a place safe for women. Bengal has failed its women."

—CV Ananda Bose, West Bengal Governor

Doctors during a protest over their safety in the wake of RG Kar Medical College incident at Nirman Bhawan in New Delhi on Monday PHOTO: PTI

MORE RAPES

1 doctor rapes UP nurse after holding her hostage

MORADABAD , 19 AUG

A Dalit nurse was allegedly raped by a doctor after being held hostage inside a private hospital, police said on Monday.

According to the complaint filed by the victim's father, the incident occurred around midnight on Sunday. Three people were arrested in the case, Superintendent of Police (Rural) Sandeep Kumar Meena said.

On Saturday evening, the victim, 20, went to the hospital for her duty at 7 pm. She had been working there for the last seven months. Late night, another nurse, Mehnaz, asked her to meet Dr Shahnawaz in his room. When she refused to do so, Mehnaz and a ward boy, Junaid, forcibly took her to a room on the top floor of the hospital and locked it from the outside, Meena said.

Later, Dr Shahnawaz entered the room and raped her after holding her hostage, Meena added. He also threatened to kill her and also hurled casteist slurs. —PTI

UP MAN BOOKED FOR NECROPHILIA

BARABANKI, 19 AUG

The district administration here has invoked the National Security Act against a man accused of murdering two women and engaging in sexual activities with their bodies, officials said on Monday.

The NSA was invoked on Saturday against Amrendra Rawat, 26, who was arrested last year for the women's murder in the Ramsanehi Ghat area, Additional Superintendent of Police (South) Akhilesh Narayan Singh said.

He was also booked under the Gangsters Act in May last year, the police added. According to police, a strangled and dishevelled body of a 60-year old woman was discovered in a nearby forest in the Ramsanehi Ghat police station area on 29 December, 2022. —PTI

Boy rapes minor girl in Bihar

Ara, 19 Aug

A 13-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by a boy in Bihar's Bihar's Bhojpur district, police said on Monday. Following the incident that happened on Sunday night, a large contingent of police was deployed in the village located in the Kishangarh police station area to prevent any disorder as the survivor and the accused belonged to different communities, they said. In a statement, police said they received a call regarding the incident around 9 pm. Police said they also searched the residence of the accused, who was on the run. The accused boy's father was called for questioning, they said. The medical report is awaited. —PTI

Man held for harassing female doctor in J&K

Rajouri/Jammu, 19 Aug

A man was arrested for allegedly creating a ruckus and harassing an on-duty female doctor inside a hospital in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri early Monday, officials said. The accused Gurpreet Singh's unruly behaviour at the sub-district hospital in Nowshera sparked a protest by doctors and the paramedical staff, they said. Singh accompanied a patient to the hospital and allegedly indulged in hooliganism without any provocation. —PTI

Man gets 20 years in jail for raping stepdaughter

Thane, 19 Aug

A 44-year-old man was sentenced to 20 years in jail by a court here for raping his 14-year-old stepdaughter in December 2014. Thane Additional Sessions Judge GG Bhansali also fined him Rs 15,000, which the court said must be paid to the victim. Six prosecution witnesses, including the victim, her sister and chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), were examined to prove the case beyond doubt, Pande said. —PTI

Man loses Rs 1.9 cr in share trading fraud in Thane

THANE, 19 AUG

A 35-year-old cloth trader from Maharashtra's Thane district was allegedly cheated of Rs 1.9 crore by fraudsters who lured him to take up share trading, police said on Monday. Based on a complaint lodged by the victim, the Khadakpada police on Saturday registered a first information report under relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act, an official said. The complainant has alleged that the accused got in touch with him and added him to a WhatsApp group to train him to take up share trading and forwarded some links for investments, he said. —PTI

2 JNU hunger strike students refuse treatment

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Two Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students participating in an ongoing indefinite hunger strike on the campus were admitted to All India Institute Of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on Monday after falling ill but they refused treatment to continue their protest, officials said. The strike entered its eighth day on Monday with students protesting against purported unresponsive attitude of the administration over their charter of demands since 11 August. The protesting students of JNU have been demanding an increase in the merit-cum-means (MCM) scholarship to at least Rs 5,000, the opening of Barak Hostel, which has remained non-operational since its inauguration in February. —PTI

CM urges banks to write off loans of landslide survivors

T'PURAM, 19 AUG

The Kerala government on Monday expressed strong displeasure over banks deducting monthly installments of loans from the accounts of landslide victims and survivors in Wayanad, and demanded that these loans be written off completely.

Waiving loans would not impose any unbearable burden upon the banks, and so it should be written off completely, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said here.

While addressing a meeting of the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) here, he said relaxation in interest amounts or extension of time for remitting monthly installments would not at all be a solution in the landslide-hit regions.

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

"Many of those who had taken the loans are deceased, and their land has become unusable due to the disaster," he pointed out.

"The only thing we can do is write off the entire loans taken by people in these affected areas," Vijayan said.

He expressed the government's strong displeasure over banks continuing to deduct monthly installments from the accounts of survivors and urged the SLBC (State Level Bankers' Committee) to take a favourable decision in this matter.

Recalling the horrors and impact of the July 30 tragedy, he said a large number of landslide victims or survivors had been engaged in farming activities in Wayanad, but the disaster has even altered the very geography of the agriculture lands there.

Citing reports, he said the affected places have become unusable, and no cultivation or settlement is possible in these areas.

He also pointed out that the banks, after writing off loans, usually expect the government to pay the waived amount. —PTI

ONLINE GAMBLING ADDICT KILLS OLD WOMAN FOR CASH

THANE, 19 AUG

A man addicted to online gambling was arrested in Bhiwandi in Thane district for allegedly murdering a 74-year-old woman, stealing her gold jewellery and then setting the house on fire to destroy evidence, a police official said on Monday. The incident took place in Zatewada on August 14, the Bhiwandi taluka police station official said."Abhimanyu Gupta (35) attacked Sevamary Augustin Nadar when she was alone, slit her throat and fled with gold ornaments. He then set the house on fire to destroy evidence. We traced him to a lodge in Thane and arrested him on Saturday. He has been charged with murder and other offences," the official said. —PTI

'ILLEGALLY DETAINED'

BMW case accused moves HC, seeks release

MUMBAI, 19 AUG

Mihir Shah, the main accused in the BMW hit-and-run case, has moved Bombay High Court claiming he has been illegally detained and has sought immediate release. Shah was arrested on 9 July, two days after he allegedly rammed his BMW car into a two-wheeler in Mumbai's Worli area, killing Kaveri Nakhwa, 45 and leaving her husband Pradeep injured. In his habeas corpus (produce the person) petition filed in HC last week, Shah claimed his detention was illegal and that he must be released immediately. A division bnch of Justices Bharati Dangre and Manjusha Deshpande is likely to take up the plea for hearing on Wednesday. Shah, 24, is accused of speeding off towards Bandra Worli Sea Link after the accident even as the woman remained on the bonnet of the car and then got entangled in its wheels for a distance of more than 1.5 kilometres. Shah, his father and former Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena leader Rajesh Shah, as well as their driver Rajrishi Bidawat were arrested in the case. Meanwhile, the minor accused of killing two persons after ramming his Porsche car in an inebriated state into a motorcycle in Pune on 19 May has undergone a 15-day safe driving programme as mandated by a court, an RTO official said on Sunday. —PTI

DJs banned during Ganesha pooja in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR, 19 AUG

The police have banned use of disc jockeys (DJ) during Ganesha Puja celebrations in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

The Ganesha puja will be celebrated on 7 September.

Police Commissioner Sanjeeb Panda said this after holding a meeting with the puja organisers in Cuttack. Similarly, Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh held another such meeting here on Sunday.

In both meetings, the organisers have been asked not to use DJ music during the puja including idol immersion processions.

The idol immersion ceremony in Cuttack is scheduled for 15, 22, and 29 September. The Puja committees have been asked to seek prior permission from the local police station seven days before, he said.

Strict action will be taken for forcible collection of donations from the people, he warned.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The police will deploy adequate number of security personnel in the capital city to regulate traffic during the puja. However, the DJ owners opposed the move and said the ban order will affect their livelihood in the upcoming festival season. —PTI

'FATAL FOR MARRIAGE'

Centre defends 2019 law on triple talaq

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Defending its 2019 law criminalising triple talaq, the Centre has told the Supreme Court that the practice is "fatal" for the social institution of marriage.

In an affidavit filed in response to petitions challenging the law, the Union of India said despite the top court setting aside the practice in 2017, it has "not worked as a sufficient deterrent in bringing down the number of divorces by this practice" among the members of the community.

"It is submitted that Parliament in its wisdom has enacted the impugned Act to protect the rights of married Muslim women who are being divorced by triple talaq.

"The impugned Act helps in ensuring the larger constitutional goals of gender justice and gender equality of married Muslim women and helps subserve their fundamental rights of non-discrimination and empowerment," the affidavit said.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

On 22 August, 2017, the apex court had declared instant triple talaq (talaq-e-biddah) unconstitutional. On August 23, 2019, the top court agreed to examine the validity of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019.

Violation of the law entails imprisonment of up to three years.

Two Muslim organisations -- Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind and Samastha Kerala Jamiathul Ulema -- have urged the court to declare the law "unconstitutional".Jamiat claimed in its petition that "criminalising a mode of divorce in one particular religion while keeping the subject of marriage and divorce in other religions only within the purview of civil law, leads to discrimination, which is not in conformity with the mandate of Article 15". —PTI

LOVE BEYOND REALMS

Woman ties rakhi to the statue of her martyred jawan brother Ganpat Ram Kadwasra who was killed in a cross firing in Jammu & Kashmir's Tanghdar sector in 2017
PHOTO: Linkedin@VEDANT BIRLA

Indian schoolgirls lead a silent cycle revolution

There has been a rapid rise in the number of students cycling to school in rural areas and the "silent revolution" is being led by girls, especially in Bihar and West Bengal, new research has found.

The scholars at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi and the Narsee Monji Institute of Management Studies also found strong evidence that bicycle distribution schemes (BDS) have helped increase cycling in States where these were implemented and the biggest beneficiaries were rural girls.

According to Srishti Agrawal, a PhD scholar at IIT-Delhi's Transportation Research and Injury Prevention Centre, gender norms, affordability of bicycles, distance to school, and safety on roads are likely the major determinants of cycling to school in India.

"Nationally, cycling to school levels increased from 6.6 per cent to 11.2 per cent over the decade (2007 to 2017). These levels nearly doubled in rural India (6.3 per cent to 12.3 per cent) while remaining stable (7.8 per cent to 8.3 per cent) in urban areas. Among the four population sub-groups, the largest increase in cycling was among girls in rural areas," Agrawal said.

The research published in the prestigious "Journal of Transport Geography" found that in a large majority of states, cycling share increased for both genders, with a greater increase among girls.

"The greatest increase in cycling among girls occurred in rural Bihar where levels increased eight-fold. In West Bengal, cycling among girls increased three-fold making it the state with the highest cycling levels among rural girls across the country.

"The cycling levels among girls almost doubled in the rural regions of the following Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The cycling levels declined significantly in rural areas of Manipur for both genders," the report noted.

Cycling levels for girls increased 10 times in Tripura and quadrupled in the States of Arunachal Pradesh and Bihar and tripled in West Bengal
PHOTO: X/@UNICEFROSA

Aditi Seth from Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai said the phenomenal rise in cycling levels across a large part of the country, is a "silent revolution".

"We use the term silent to not only indicate the absence of traffic noise, cycling is associated with, but also to highlight a complete lack of attention on this trend and its underlying reasons within the community of transport researchers, policymakers, or practitioners.

"For instance, we did not find a single research paper published in a transportation journal that studied the travel behaviour impact of bicycle distribution schemes, which we found are the drivers for the growth and widespread use of cycling in many states.

"We call it a revolution because cycling levels increased among girls in a country which has high levels of gender inequality in terms of female mobility outside the home, in general, and for cycling, in particular," Seth said.

In urban areas, cycling levels either declined or remained constant in more than half of the states among both genders. In a few states, where cycling levels increased, there have been significant jumps.

For girls, cycling levels increased 10 times in Tripura and quadrupled in the states of Arunachal Pradesh and Bihar and tripled in West Bengal.

For boys, cycling levels increased from no cycling to 5.8 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh, more than tripled in Delhi and doubled in the states of Chhattisgarh and West Bengal.

In urban areas of the states (Haryana, Maharashtra, and Punjab) where cycling share declined for both genders, the decline was greater for boys compared to girls.

"We found strong evidence of the positive impact of bicycle distribution schemes on cycling levels. Overall, cycling levels increased by an average of 3.6 percentage points in states with BDS and by 0.8 percentage points without BDS. States with the largest growth in cycling levels were often the ones where BDS was implemented, particularly in rural areas," said Rahul Goel, Assistant Professor, IIT-Delhi.

"Also, the effects of BDS were more prominent in rural areas, because a large proportion of students (more than 70 per cent) are enrolled in government schools, which are the type of schools that are eligible for BDS.

"In comparison, the majority of the students in urban areas are enrolled in private schools where BDS is not applicable and hence its impact is small," he added. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR

Despite being mocked at, Biden fights to beat odds

Sixteen years ago, a triumphant Joe Biden addressed an adoring crowd at the Democratic National Convention in Denver, his smile radiating confidence about the country's future and his own journey.

The soon-to-be vice president hugged his son Beau. He spoke about how his own parents had endowed him with a sense of grit and tenacity.

"Failure at some point in your life is inevitable, but giving up is unforgivable."

In 2024, Biden was not forced to reconcile a failure of his presidency. He compiled a list of significant accomplishments that will be felt for years. But he chose to give up his campaign under pressure from Democratic leaders, in a remarkable concession to the passage of time, when allies in his party and a clear majority of US adults concluded the 81-year-old should not seek reelection. After Biden's decision to leave the presidential race, his party not only forgave him, its leaders praised him.

So Joseph Robinette Biden Jr comes to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago this week both revered and resigned.

Biden had consolidated his party's support and did not have a serious competitor. But that support crumbled after a disastrous debate in June when his frailties were on unsparing public display, reinforcing his greatest liability — that at his age he might no longer be up for the job.

In Chicago, Biden has decided to get back up and show the difference between stepping aside and quitting. His vice president, Kamala Harris, is now in the spotlight as the nominee. For the president, it's the latest in a life marked by the cycles of loss and recovery.

"He has had wonderful things happen to him and he has had terrible things happen to him," said Ted Kaufman, his friend, former aide and appointed successor in the Senate from Delaware.

This story is based on interviews with aides, colleagues and those who have worked with Biden over a half-century career in politics. Biden arrived at the White House with a hope that a focus on the public good could help heal the partisan malice that emerged with the ascent of former President Donald Trump, now again the Republican nominee.

No one denied the ego necessary to pursue the White House. But those interviewed stressed that Biden sees his legacy more as a leader who could demonstrate during a cynical era that government was a force for good.

"It's less about him," said Stefanie Feldman, an assistant to the president and the White House staff secretary. "He wants people to understand that the federal government is delivering results."

Biden deployed his decades in the Senate to forge a bipartisan infrastructure deal. He signed into law far-reaching investments in advanced technologies and brokered a debt deal with Republicans to avoid a catastrophic default. Biden last week stressed that he was reducing prices on 10 of Medicare's costliest prescription drugs.

He also helped to restore the faith of longtime allies that the United States could be an unflinching partner, and led the effort to provide much needed backing for Ukraine's war against a Russian invasion and to counter China's rise.

He dealt with a pandemic, inflation, immigration challenges, a broken supply chain and a troubled withdrawal from Afghanistan.

"The experience he brought to the job — there's no question — gave him the ability to achieve things that no one thought he could achieve," said Anita Dunn, who worked as a senior adviser. "It's not just experience though. It's relationships. It's understanding how Congress works and how members of Congress can be brought along to get things done."

But Americans consistently saw not the accrued wisdom, but the stiff-legged, shuffling steps and the verbal struggles.

Born too early to qualify as a Baby Boomer, the arc of Biden's political career has been full of remarkable successes and staggering defeats. He was elected to the Senate from Delaware at 29, only to lose his wife and daughter in a car crash. He found a new partner in Jill and sought the presidency in the 1988 cycle, only to withdraw after reports of plagiarism. Then he dealt with serious health issues, surviving two brain aneurysms.

His 2008 presidential campaign was a washout, but he became President Barack Obama's trusted No. 2. Then Beau died of brain cancer and his other son, Hunter, succumbed to drug addiction. Against long odds, Biden won the Democratic nomination in 2020 and then beat Trump, only to have his party want someone else to run against his predecessor this year. *—PTI*

Biden sees his legacy more as a leader who could demonstrate during a cynical era that government was a force for good
PHOTO: ANI

What can be done about Gen Z's climate anxiety?

In June 2024, 13 young people in Hawaii took on their state government in court and won the right to have greater input in climate policy.

They sued the state for infringing on their right to "a clean and healthful environment", as promised under the State constitution.

In victory, the young people forced a number of concessions including a pledge to pursue net zero by 2040 and over $ 40 million investment in electric vehicles over the next six years. Young people are turning to activism as a way to process the emotional weight of a world in crisis.

From Greta Thunberg to Australia's Anjali Sharma, there are plenty of people in Gen Z who are taking action on climate.

Despite the United Nations also adding the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2022 which further opens the possibility to take governments to the courts, it's not easy.

Gen Z is growing up in an era where the impacts of climate change are both immediate and undeniable and it's leaving them feeling powerless.

Generation Z — those born between 1995 and 2010 — make up 30 per cent of the global population. In Australia's latest census, Gen Z accounted for 18.2 per cent (or 4.6 million) of the country's 25 million population.

Unlike previous generations, who had time to gradually adjust to the realities of environmental transformations, Generation Z is acutely aware of the ecological crises unfolding around them, leading to a deep sense of environmental anxiety.

Distress and fear

As a result, many digitally connected, globally aware Gen Zers experience intense climate anxiety, characterised by chronic fear, distress and deep concern for the planet's future.

A survey of Australian Gen Z university students was conducted between September 2021 and April 2022 with 446 participants which revealed that climate change is their top environmental concern.

They often feel let down by older generations, governments and institutions, whose actions seem inadequate in the face of the growing evidence about the environmental threats the world and Australia in particular face.

The situation Gen Z faces and their future prospects are further exacerbated by the complexity of other developments resulting in what is known as a polycrisis, a "great disagreement, confusion, or suffering that is caused by many different problems happening at the same time so that they together have a very big effect."

Young people are turning to activism as a way to process the emotional weight of a world in crisis
PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Existential threat

Eco-anxiety, a chronic fear of an environmental catastrophe, arises from the perception that climate change poses an existential threat. For many in Gen Z, the overwhelming nature of this threat leads to persistent worry and stress. This is also fuelled by the sense of urgency and responsibility they think they have to comply with. Gen Z are witnessing their local natural environments and the broader global ecosystem undergo rapid, often destructive and irreversible changes, including biodiversity loss, species extinction and the degradation of ecosystems. Many experience profound grief which is tied not just to physical harms, but also to the loss of hope for a stable and prosperous future.

With 96 per cent of Australian Gen Zs believing that climate change is human-made, young people are experiencing heightened levels of stress, anxiety and depression as they grapple with the realities of a warming planet. For some members of Gen Z, the constant stream of climate-related news, coupled with personal experiences of climate related calamities, such as wildfires, floods, droughts or cyclones, leads to a form of trauma that can have long-lasting effects on mental health.

A generational crisis

For Gen Z, climate change anxiety is not just about fear of environmental destruction; it is also about grappling with a crisis of identity and purpose.

As they come of age in a world that seems increasingly unstable and unpredictable, many young people are questioning what kind of future they can expect to have, and whether it is even ethical to plan for the future in traditional ways, such as pursuing professional careers, starting families or buying homes, when the planet is in such peril.

This crisis of identity is further complicated by the pressure to act.

Many young people feel a deep sense of responsibility to address climate change, but this can also ignite feelings of guilt and shame when they perceive their actions as insufficient.

The weight of this responsibility can be overwhelming, leading to burnout and a sense of futility.

The role of activism

In response to these challenges, some members of Gen Z are channelling their anxiety into activism. Climate activism is seen as a way to regain a sense of control and agency in the face of overwhelming challenges.

This activism takes many forms, from participating in global climate strikes to advocating for sustainable policies at the local level. However, activism is not a panacea for climate anxiety. This is seen from the answers of 65 per cent of Australia's university Gen Z who do not engage in traditional climate activism, but instead are using technology and social media to voice their concerns.

While it can provide a sense of purpose and community, activism can also be exhausting. The constant need to fight for change, coupled with the slow pace of progress, can lead to burnout and exacerbate mental health issues. Additionally, the pressure to always be "on" and engaged in activism can be mentally and emotionally draining, leading to further feelings of hopelessness and despair. *—PTI*

PHOTO: english.gujaratsamachar

7 people killed in landslide in western Nepal

KATHMANDU, 19 AUG

Seven people from two families were killed in separate incidents of landslides triggered by incessant rains in western Nepal in the last 24 hours, police said on Monday. Four members of a family were buried alive in the Bajhang district as a landslide swept away a house at the Bungal municipality-10 on Sunday night, according to the police. Those killed included 50-year-old Kali Dhami, her daughter-in-law and grandchildren aged six and three, said the police. However, six other members of the family managed to escape from nature's fury. In the Jajarkot district, a landslide buried a temporary shelter in the Majhagaun of Nalgad municipality-2 in the early morning on Monday, killing three members of a single family.—*PTI*

China, Vietnam to strengthen political ties

BEIJING, 19 AUG

The leaders of China and Vietnam pledged to further their economic ties and gave a nod to their shared communist ideology during the first visit by Vietnam's new president to Beijing on Monday. To Lam, who took office in May, made China the destination of his first state visit, signalling the continuing importance the Southeast Asian nation places on its giant neighbour despite ongoing territorial frictions in the South China Sea. Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Li Yuan, hosted a ceremony for Lam and his wife, Ngo Phuong Ly, at Beijing's vast Great Hall of the People, replete with flags, flowers and a marching band. Xi remarked on the "deep friendship" between Vietnam, China said Vietnam was a priority for Beijing's "neighbourhood diplomacy." —*AP*

Imran's party accuses Pakistan's poll panel

ISLAMABAD, 19 AUG

Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party has accused Pakistan's Election Commission of attempting to change election tribunals in Punjab province, appointed by the Lahore High Court chief justice to settle electoral disputes. "The election tribunals in Punjab, appointed by the Lahore High Court chief justice, were not allowed to function. However, the election tribunals in other provinces functioned as per the list provided by the respective chief justices," Barrister Salman Akram Raja, a leader of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf said. Raja told that the people of Pakistan cannot forget general elections, where "the worst rigging took place," Geo News reported. —*PTI*

UK tycoon among 6 missing after boat sinks off Sicily

ROME, 19 AUG

British tech giant Mike Lynch, his lawyer and four other people are among those missing after their luxury superyacht sank during a freak storm off Sicily early Monday, Italy's civil protection and authorities said. Lynch's wife and 14 other people survived. He said a helicopter and rescue boats from the coast guard and fire rescue service were at the scene searching for the missing. The boat capsized around 5 am off Palermo. Local media said a fierce storm, including water spouts, battered the area overnight. The daily Il Giornale de Sicilia reported the sailboat was flying a British flag and had mostly British passengers on board, but also people form New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Ireland and British-French citizens. The boat, which it said was named "Bajesian," had been moored in the port at Porticello. —*AP*

Ceasefire talks may be last chance to free hostages, says Blinken

Blinken is stepping up US diplomatic pressure to secure a ceasefire despite rifts

Relatives of hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip and their supporters protest in Tel Aviv, Israel **PHOTO: PTI**

TEL AVIV, 19 AUG

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Monday the time is now to conclude a Gaza cease-fire agreement that would return hostages held by Hamas and bring relief to Palestinian suffering after 10 months of devastating fighting in Gaza.

Blinken's ninth urgent mission to the Middle East since the conflict began came days after mediators, including the United States, expressed renewed optimism a deal was near.

But Hamas has expressed deep dissatisfaction with the latest proposal and Israel has said there were areas it was unwilling to compromise.

The trip, days ahead of new talks expected this week in Egypt, comes amid fears the conflict could widen into a deeper regional war following the killings of top militant commanders in Lebanon that Iran blamed on Israel.

"This is a decisive moment, probably the best, maybe the last, opportunity to get the hostages home, to get a cease-fire and to put everyone on a better path to enduring peace and security," Blinken said as he opened talks with Israeli President Isaac Herzog in Tel Aviv.

"It's also time to make sure that no one takes any steps that could derail this process," he said in a veiled reference to Iran. "And so we're working to make sure that there is no escalation, that there are no provocations, that there are no actions that in any way move us away from getting this deal over the line, or for that matter, escalating the conflict to other places and to greater intensity."

Herzog thanked Blinken for the Biden administration's support for Israel and lamented a spate of recent attacks against Israelis in the past 24 hours. Mediators are to meet again this week in Cairo to try to cement a cease-fire. Blinken will travel to Egypt on Tuesday after he wraps up his Israel stop in meetings with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant later Monday.

Officials said the US has presented proposals to bridge all the gaps remaining between the Israeli and Hamas positions. Formal responses to the US outline are expected this week and could lead to a cease-fire declaration unless the talks collapse, as has happened with multiple previous efforts. —*AP*

1 Palestinian killed, 2 injured in Istanbul shooting

Istanbul, 19 Aug

Police in Istanbul have launched a "large-scale investigation" after a Palestinian was killed and two others were wounded in a shooting as they sat in a car, officials and media said Monday. The killer dropped a handgun fitted with a silencer at the scene, the Istanbul Governor's Office said in a brief statement. The Demiroren News Agency reported that the man sitting in the driver's seat was killed and his friend seriously wounded in the shooting late Sunday. —*AP*

NEW THAI PM TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH INDIA

SINGAPORE, 19 AUG

Thailand's new Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra on Monday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his greetings and said she looked forward to working closely with him to build upon the existing ties and explore untapped potentials to create even greater opportunities for the two countries.

Shinawatra, the 37-year-old former business executive, became Thailand's youngest prime minister after receiving a royal letter of endorsement on Sunday, two days after she was chosen by Parliament following a court order that removed her predecessor. "I am confident that we can build upon our existing ties and explore untapped potentials to create even greater opportunities for our two countries, peoples and beyond," she said further in the post that was in response to Prime Minister Modi's post congratulating her.

"Congratulations @ingshin on your election as the Prime Minister of Thailand. Best wishes for a very successful tenure. Look forward to working with you to further strengthen the bilateral ties between India and Thailand that are based on the strong foundations of civilisational, cultural and people to people connect," Modi said. —*PTI*

Ukraine aims to create buffer zone inside Russia

KYIV, 19 AUG

Volodymyr Zelenskyy **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday the daring military incursion into Russia's Kursk region aims to create a buffer zone to prevent further attacks by Moscow across the border.

It was the first time Zelenskyy clearly stated the aim of the operation, which was launched on August 6. Previously, he had said the operation aimed to protect communities in the bordering Sumy region from constant shelling.

Zelenskyy said "it is now our primary task in defensive operations overall: to destroy as much Russian war potential as possible and conduct maximum counteroffensive actions. This includes creating a buffer zone on the aggressor's territory -- our operation in the Kursk region," he said in his nightly address.

This weekend, Ukraine has destroyed a key bridge in the region and struck a second one nearby, disrupting supply lines as it pressed a stunning cross-border incursion that began 6 August, officials said.

As of Sunday morning, there were no officials giving the exact location of the second bridge attack. But Russian Telegram channels claimed that a second bridge over the Seim, in the village of Zvannoe, had been struck.

According to Russia's Mash news site, the attacks left only one intact bridge in the area. The Associated Press could not immediately verify these claims. If confirmed, the Ukrainian strikes would further complicate Moscow's attempts to replenish its forces in Kursk and evacuate civilians. —*AP*

Chinese, Filipino ships collide again

TAIPEI, 19 AUG

Chinese and Philippine coast guard ships collided at sea, damaging at least two boats, in an encounter early Monday near a new flashpoint in their increasingly alarming confrontations in the disputed South China Sea.

Both blamed the other for the collision near Sabina Shoal, a disputed atoll in the Spratly Islands, where overlapping claims are also made by Vietnam and Taiwan. There were no reports of injuries.

China's coast guard accused the Philippines of deliberately crashing one of its ships into a Chinese vessel. Two Philippine coast guard ships entered waters near the shoal, ignored the Chinese coast guard's warning and intentionally collided with one of China's boats at 3:24 am, a spokesperson said in a statement on the Chinese coast guard's website.

"The Philippine side is entirely responsible for the collision," spokesman Gan Yu said. "We warn the Philippine side to immediately stop its infringement and provocation, otherwise it will bear all the consequences arising from that."

China's coast guard accused the Philippines of deliberately crashing one of its ships into a Chinese vessel **PHOTO: CHINA COAST GUARD**

The Philippines' National Task Force on the West Philippine Sea said two of the coast guard's ships, BRP Bagacay and BRP Cape Engano, "encountered unlawful and aggressive maneuvers" from Chinese coast guard vessels while en route to Patag and Lawak islands in the area.

The task force said the collision between BRP Cape Engano and one of the Chinese ships created a hole on the deck of the Philippine ship with a diameter of about 5 inches (12.7 centimetres).

About 16 minutes later, the other Philippine ship, BRP Bagacay, was rammed twice on its port and starboard sides by a different Chinese vessel, leading to minor structural damage, according to the task force.

"The (Philippine Coast Guard) stands firm in its responsibility to ensure the safety and security of our maritime domain while addressing any threats to our national interests," it said. —*AP*

US, S Korea begin joint military drills

SEOUL, 19 AUG

US and South Korean troops kicked off a large-scale exercise aimed at strengthening their combined defence capabilities against nuclear-armed North Korea, which again accused the allies of practicing an invasion. The annual summertime exercise comes amid heightened tensions as the pace of North Korea's weapons demonstrations and US-South Korea combined military exercises have intensified in a cycle of tit-for-tat. —*AP*

Trump will campaign across United States this week

BEDMINSTER, 19 AUG

Donald Trump **PHOTO: AP**

As Democrats kick off their convention in Chicago, Donald Trump's campaign is trying to regain its footing after weeks of struggling to adjust to Vice President Kamala Harris at the top of the opposing ticket.

Trump will attempt to undercut the Democratic celebration with a jam-packed schedule that includes daily events in battleground states tied to subjects where Republicans think they hold an advantage. It's his busiest campaign week, when he faced challengers in the Republican primary. But when Trump has held events billed as policy speeches throughout the campaign, they have often resembled his usual, rambling rally remarks. And as has long been the case during his political career, Trump has undercut his own message with outbursts and attacks that drown out anything else.

The outbursts have alarmed allies, who worry Trump is damaging his chance in what they believe is an eminently winnable race. Privately and publicly, they have urged him to focus on policy instead of personality, and to do more to broaden his appeal with swing voters as they grow nervous about Harris' competitiveness. —*AP*

PROTESTERS PLAN LARGE MARCHES AND RALLIES

CHICAGO, 19 AUG

Crowds of activists are expected to gather in Chicago for protests outside the Democratic National Convention this week, hoping to call attention to such issues as economic injustice, reproductive rights and the war in Gaza.

While Vice President Kamala Harris has galvanised the party as she gears up to accept the Democratic nomination, activists say their plans to demonstrate haven't changed. —*AP*

Prince Mohammed forged King's sign on Yemen war decree, says ex-official

DUBAI, 19 AUG

A former Saudi official alleged in a report that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman forged the signature of his father on the royal decree that launched the kingdom's yearslong, stalemated war against Yemen's Houthi rebels.

Saudi Arabia did not immediately respond to a request for comment over the allegations made without supporting evidence by Saad al-Jabri in an interview published Monday by BBC, though the kingdom has described him as "a discredited former government official."

Al-Jabri, a former Saudi intelligence official who lives in exile in Canada, has been a yearslong dispute with the kingdom as his two children have been imprisoned in case he describes as trying to lure him back to Saudi Arabia.

Mohammed bin Salman **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

- The allegation comes as Prince Mohammed now serves as the de facto leader of Saudi Arabia, often meeting leaders in place of his father, the King Salman

The allegation comes as Prince Mohammed now serves as the de facto leader of Saudi Arabia, often meeting leaders in place of his father, the 88-year-old King Salman.

His assertive behaviour, particularly at the start of his ascension to power around the beginning of the Yemen war in 2015, extended to a wider crackdown on any perceived dissent or power base that could challenge his rule. In al-Jabri's remarks to BBC, he said a "credible, reliable" official linked to the Saudi Interior Ministry confirmed to him that Prince Mohammed signed the royal decree declaring war in place of his father.

The Houthis also since the start the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip have launched attacks on shipping that have disrupted traffic through the Red Sea — and led to the most intense combat faced by the US Navy since World War II.—*AP*

'ACTION REQUIRED'

Record number of aid workers killed in 2023: UN report

BERLIN, 19 AUG

UN said that 280 workers were killed in 33 countries **PHOTO: UNICEF**

A record number of aid workers were killed in conflicts around the world last year, and this year may be on course to be even deadlier, the United Nations said Monday.

The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that 280 aid workers were killed in 33 countries in 2023 — more than double the previous year's figure of 118. It said that more than half of last year's deaths were registered in the first three months of the Israel-Gaza war that started in October, mostly as a result of airstrikes.

The office said that this year "may be on track for an even deadlier outcome," with 172 aid workers killed as of August 7. More than 280, the majority of them with the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, have been killed in Gaza so far, according to OCHA. It said that "extreme levels of violence in Sudan and South Sudan" also have contributed to the death toll both this year and last.

She demanded in a statement that "people in power act to end violations against civilians and the impunity with which these heinous attacks are committed." —*AP*

B'desh unrest: Major police reshuffle in Dhaka

DHAKA, 19 AUG

The chiefs of 32 police stations in Dhaka have been transferred, days after the transfer of the 18 other officers-in-charge, in a major reshuffle after the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina-led government in Bangladesh, a media report said on Monday.

The order for the transfer came at midnight on Sunday, the bdnews24.com news portal reported.

With the latest transfer, the heads of all 50 police stations under the Dhaka Metropolitan Police have been transferred now.

Others have been transferred to the Tourist Police, the Armed Police Battalion, or the Industrial Police.

- With the latest transfer, the heads of all 50 police stations under the Dhaka Metropolitan Police have been transferred now

There has been a reshuffling of police at all levels since the ouster of prime minister Hasina on 5 August.

Hasina, 76, resigned and fled to India following the massive protest by students against a controversial quota system in government jobs. —*PTI*

FRESH MURDER CASE FILED AGAINST HASINA

DHAKA, 19 AUG

A new murder case has been filed against Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and 62 others, including ex-ministers of her cabinet, over the death of a fish trader during the quota reform protests in the country, a media report said on Monday.

The case, filed late on Sunday, was the latest in the slew of cases filed against the 76-year-old leader after her resignation and fleeing to India on 5 August following a massive protest by students against a quota system in government jobs. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

FM exhorts banks to improve deposit growth at PSB meet

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharman on Monday held a performance review meeting with heads of public sector banks and urged them to improve their deposit growth. Deposits have been growing 300-400 basis points lower than the credit growth in the last few months, creating an asset-liability mismatch for banks. According to sources, the finance minister reviewed the financial performance of banks and progress made in the implementation of various flagship schemes of the government, including PM Awas Yojana, PM Surya Ghar and PM Vishwakarma Yojana. Sitharman also took stock of deposit growth, credit-to-deposit ratio (CD ratio) and asset quality, sources said. She asked the banks' chief to focus on core banking business. *—PTI*

Rupee rises 8 paise to close at 83.87 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 19 AUG

The Indian rupee appreciated by 8 paise to close at 83.87 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, supported by a weak US dollar and a decline in crude oil prices. Forex traders said fresh foreign fund inflows boosted investor sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 83.88 against the greenback, then gained ground and touched an intra-day high of 83.84, and a low of 83.93 against the American currency. The local currency finally settled for the day at 83.88 (provisional) against the American currency. On Friday, the rupee moved in a tight range and settled just 1 paisa lower at 83.95 against the American currency. Meanwhile, the dollar index, , was trading lower by to 102.17. *—PTI*

Leather exporters' delegation to visit Russia from 26 Aug

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

A delegation of over 20 leather sector executives will be visiting Russia this month to seek investments and tap growing export opportunities. The three-day visit will start from 26 August. Council for Leather Exports Executive Director R Selvam said that at present India is exporting leather goods in the range of USD 60 million to USD 80 million, but it is low as huge opportunities are there in Russia. He said that huge export opportunities are there in areas like leather garments, goods and footwear. The export of leather, leather products and footwear rose from USD 44.84 million in 2022-23 to USD 62.48 million in 2023-24. *—PTI*

Aurobindo Pharma to start China plant in FY25: CFO

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Aurobindo Pharma expects its China facility to commence production in the next quarter with full-scale output anticipated only in the next fiscal year, according to Chief Financial Officer Santhanam Subramanian. The Hyderabad-based drug major plans to start a small volume roll out in the November-December period and expects to ramp it up in the January-March quarter of the next year. The company's Rs 2,400 crore Pen-G plant in Andhra Pradesh, which was approved under Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Promotion of Domestic Manufacturing of Critical Key Starting Materials (KSMs)/ Drug Intermediates and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) in the country, will have a production capacity of around 15,000 tonnes annually. *—PTI*

Sensex, Nifty settle almost flat in lacklustre trade

Sensex slips 12.16 points to settle at 80,424.68

MUMBAI, 19 AUG

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty ended on a flat note in a lacklustre trade on Monday, as investors preferred to remain on the sidelines awaiting further triggers.

Participants also booked profits in select blue-chip stocks amid high valuation concerns, according to experts.

In a range-bound trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex slipped 12.16 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 80,424.68. During the day, it hit a high of 80,724.40 and a low of 80,332.65.

The NSE Nifty edged up 31.50 points or 0.13 per cent to 24,572.65 in a volatile trade.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, Mahindra & Mahindra, IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel, Axis Bank, Tata Motors and ICICI Bank were the biggest laggards.

Nifty edged up 31.50 points or 0.13 per cent to 24,572.65 in a volatile trade PHOTO: PTI

In contrast, Tata Steel, Tata Consultancy Services, NTPC, JSW Steel, Asian Paints and Reliance Industries were gainers.

In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher, while Seoul and Tokyo ended lower.

European markets were trading mostly higher. The US markets ended in positive territory on Friday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Friday as they bought equities worth Rs 766.52 crore, according to exchange data.

Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 2,606.18 crore on Friday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.82 per cent to USD 79.03 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark jumped 1,330.96 points or 1.68 per cent to settle at 80,436.84 on Friday, marking its best single-day gains in more than two months.

The NSE Nifty surged 397.40 points or 1.65 per cent to settle at a two-week high of 24,541.15. *—PTI*

OPERATIONAL FROM NOV

Tata to invest ₹6,000 crore in 4th iPhone plant

Tata's iPhone manufacturing plant is located in Hosur, Tamil Nadu, and it is said to be begin the project by November this year PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

- The fourth factory will help the company achieve its goal of shifting 10 per cent of global iPhone manufacturing capacity to India by 2025-26

Tata Electronic's iPhone manufacturing plant in Hosur, Tamil Nadu, is likely to begin production in November this year, according to sources.

The 250 acre Hosur facility is Apple's fourth such assembly plant in India, and Tata Electronics' second for the US-based tech major's flagship smartphone line. This move underscores Tata's growing involvement in Apple's supply chain, particularly as Apple seeks to diversify its manufacturing operations away from China amid ongoing geopolitical tensions between China and the United States.

The Hosur plant is expected to be a major employer, with plans to hire over 50,000 workers, the majority of whom will be women. The assembly unit alone is projected to create jobs for 35,000 to 40,000 workers, making it the largest iPhone manufacturing facility in India.

Apple's contract manufacturers in India, including Tata, Pegatron, and Foxconn, are central to this expansion. Tata's involvement is particularly significant, as the company is seen as a key player in Apple's efforts to increase its manufacturing presence in India.

The prospective plant is expected to bolster Apple's pursuit of localising its supply chain and enhance its collaboration with Tata. The Indian group at present oversees an iPhone manufacturing unit obtained from Wistron Corp. in Karnataka.

As Apple continues to diversify its manufacturing base, this investment by Tata not only strengthens its ties with the tech giant but also boosts India's profile as a major player in the global electronics manufacturing sector.

Apple began production in India just four years ago and has since expanded rapidly.

The fourth factory will help the company achieve its goal of shifting 10 per cent of global iPhone manufacturing capacity to India by 2025-26, taking advantage of the government's production-linked incentive scheme. *—Salar with agencies*

Domestic air traffic rises 7.3% to 1.29 cr on annual basis in July

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Indian carriers flew more than 1.29 crore passengers in July, an increase of more than 7.3 per cent compared to the year-ago period, official data released on Monday showed.

However, the air traffic in July was lower compared to 1.32 crore people carried by the domestic airlines in June this year.

IndiGo continued to dominate domestic air traffic with its market share rising to 62 per cent in July while that of Air India dropped 14.3 per cent.

Last month, the domestic market share of Vistara climbed to 10 per cent while that of AIX Connect and SpiceJet declined to 4.5 per cent and 3.1 per cent, respectively, as per the data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Also, Akasa Air and Alliance Air's share slipped to 4.7 per cent and 0.9 per cent, respectively.

The air traffic in July was lower compared to 1.32 crore people carried by the domestic airlines in June PHOTO: PTI

In July, domestic air traffic touched 129.87 lakh compared to 132.06 lakh in June this year and 121 lakh in July 2023.

The data also showed that 1,114 passengers were denied boarding and airlines doled out Rs 112.71 lakh towards compensation and facilities.

As many as 1,54,770 passengers were affected by cancellations and carriers spent Rs 110.59 lakh for compensation and facilities in this regard.

On account of flight delays, 3,20,302 passengers were impacted in July and airlines shelled out Rs 341.05 lakh towards facilitation. *—PTI*

ELECTRONICS MKT TO DOUBLE IN 5 YEARS: ICICI

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

The first quarter earnings season in the Indian stock market is almost over, with most major listed companies having already announced their results.

According to an analysis by the brokerage firm ICICI Direct, the top four sectors that reported strong numbers in the first quarter are Capital Markets, Consumer Durables, Electronic Manufacturing Services, and Waste Management.

For the Capital Markets sector, ICICI Direct highlighted that companies delivered strong results, driven by rising volumes, orders, and client additions.

The Asset Management Company (AMC) sector also saw growth, supported by buoyant net equity inflows and record-high SIP flows. *—ANI*

Adani Group's EBITDA sees 33% surge in Q1

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Billionaire Gautam Adani's ports-to-energy conglomerate saw June quarter pre-tax profit surge by 33 per cent on back of strong performance by core infrastructure business as also emerging businesses ranging from solar and wind manufacturing to airports.

"EBITDA (in April-June) surged by 32.87 per cent year-on-year to reach Rs 22,570 crore, resulting in a trailing twelve-month (TTM) EBITDA of Rs 79,180 crore, marking a 45.13 per cent increase over the corresponding TTM of the previous year," the group said in a statement.

Group net profit jumped over 50 per cent to Rs 10,279 crore in April-June - the first quarter of the current 2024-25 fiscal year.

The core infrastructure platform comprises flagship Adani Enterprises Ltd's infrastructure businesses, utility (Adani Green Energy, Adani Power, Adani Energy Solutions, and Adani Total Gas) and transport (Adani Ports & SEZ) businesses.

PHOTO: ANI

Adani Enterprises - the business incubator of the group - saw EBITDA rise 46 per cent to Rs 4,487 crore and net profit more than double to Rs 1,776 crore in April-June.

Renewable energy firm Adani Green Energy posted a 30 per cent rise in EBITDA to Rs 2,866 crore and a near doubling of net profit to Rs 629 crore as operational capacity expanded by almost a third. Adani Power profit surged 54 per cent to Rs 3,490 crore driven by sales while the same for Adani Ports & SEZ was up 47 per cent to Rs 3,107 crore. *—PTI*

768 firms avail benefits of SEBI's 2024 settlement case

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

A total of 768 entities settled cases pertaining to alleged non-genuine trades at the stock options segment on the BSE with SEBI under the settlement scheme introduced in 2024, the markets regulator said on Monday.

The regulator introduced the SEBI Settlement Scheme, 2022, allowing entities to settle their cases. After the scheme closed, the regulator continued legal proceedings against those who did not participate.

During a hearing in September 2023, the Tribunal directed that if a new settlement scheme is introduced in the future, the appellants would be eligible to benefit from it, and the scheme would cover their cases.

Accordingly, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) introduced the 'ISO Settlement Scheme, 2024' to provide an opportunity to the entities against whom proceedings had been

Accordingly, SEBI said, "The proceedings that have been initiated and are pending before any forum or authority for the violations... be settled qua the applicants (768)".

It was further noted that of the 21,652 entities that had executed trades on the BSE Stock Options Segment, 14,720 entities were involved in the generation of artificial volumes by executing non-genuine or reversal trades, in violation of PFUTP (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices) rules. —PTI

'FM must identify high risk taxpayers in schemes'

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has asked the Finance Ministry to identify high risk taxpayers in the GST composition scheme on a periodical basis and verify from other sources, including third parties, their declared value of sales to check tax evasion.

Based on an analysis of 8.66 lakh composition taxpayers under the central jurisdiction between 2019-20 to 2021-22 fiscals, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) found that a significant number of GST taxpayers have a high risk of crossing the turnover threshold for composition levy scheme (CLS).

PHOTO: PTI

These high risk taxpayers were identified by audit from the data contained in GST returns viz. GSTR-4A, GSTR-7 along with third party data sources such as IT returns, 'Vahan' database etc.

The GST composition scheme is available to taxpayers whose aggregate turnover, in the preceding financial year, has not exceeded Rs 1.5 crore. For taxpayers in special category states. The official auditor also suggested that the Finance Ministry may develop a system of identifying ineligible taxpayers and take action to exclude them from the CLS in order to prevent misuse of the intended benefits of the scheme. *—PTI*

HIGHEST EVER SO FAR

Blinkit sells record of 693 rakhis per minute

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Blinkit records highest sales of 693 rakhis per minute on Sunday due to Rakhsha Bandhan eve according to its CEO Albinder Dhindsa. "We'll cross all time high orders in a day on blinkit in a couple of minutes. We also hit highest ever OPM (Orders per minute), GMV, chocolate sales and most other metrics today", he said on X.

Thanking customers, the Blinkit CEO posted, "Especially the ones who placed their first Blinkit order today for trusting the service."

The surge in sales followed Blinkit's new 'international orders' feature, allowing users in select countries to send rakhis and gifts to their siblings in India for a limited time period.

The surge in sales followed Blinkit's new 'international orders' feature, allowing users to send rakhis to their siblings in India PHOTO: @ blinkit.com

In a post on social media platform X, Dhindsa said: "Raksha Bandhan special - we've switched on international orders on Blinkit till 19 August."

- In another post, Blinkit CEO said, "It's a close one between Laddu and Gulab Jamun. But the real surprise today has been Kaju Katli sales"

The feature allows customers in six countries - USA, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan, France and Canada - to place orders on Blinkit and send rakhis and festive items, including sweets and snacks etc, to their siblings in India. Blinkit promises to deliver these items in just 10 minutes.

In another post, Blinkit CEO said, "It's a close one between Laddu and Gulab Jamun. But the real surprise today has been Kaju Katli sales." *—Salar with Agencies*

SBI report denies bank deposit concerns

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

As Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman holds a review meeting with heads of Public Sector Banks and Regional Rural Banks on Monday, the State Bank of India (SBI) in its latest report noted that the belief that the deposit growth in the banking sector is flagging is just a statistical myth.

However, the report highlighted that, while it's true that credit growth has outpaced deposit growth in recent years, leading some to trumpet this as a sign of decelerating deposit activity, analysis reveals a different story.

The report highlighted that in FY23, the banking sector, particularly All Scheduled Commercial Banks (ASCBs), registered the highest absolute growth in both deposits and credit since 1951-52.

PHOTO: ANI

Deposits grew by an impressive Rs 15.7 lakh crore, while credit expanded by Rs 17.8 lakh crore, pushing the incremental Credit-Deposit (CD) Ratio to a staggering 113 per cent. According to RBI study, we are in the 26th month of this divergence, with predictions indicating that the cycle could end between June and October 2025.

Moreover, the rising returns on term deposits have been driving a significant compositional shift in deposits. *—ANI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Switzerland's Yann retires from national games

ZURICH, 19 AUG

After a decade as Switzerland's No. 1 goalkeeper, Yann Sommer retired from the national team on Monday at age 35 to focus on playing for Inter Milan. Sommer's decision announced by the Swiss soccer federation will likely see Gregor Kobel of Borussia Dortmund step up as the first-choice 'keeper. Sommer went to three World Cups and three European Championships with Switzerland after making his debut in 2012. The last of his 94 games was a penalty shootout loss to England after a 1-1 draw in the Euro 2024 quarterfinals last month in Germany. Sommer's finest moment for the national team was saving Kylian Mbappé's penalty to seal a shootout win against France after a 3-3 draw in the round of 16 at Euro 2020. —*AP*

Jeev finishes tied-12th in Zambia Legends

LUSAKA, 19 AUG

Jeev Milkha Singh started the final round with three birdies in the first four holes and finished tied 12th at the Zambia Legends Championship. In between his superb start and the great finish, Jeev had one birdie, an eagle two and three bogeys, as he gets ready for the HSBC Legends Indian Championship which will be hosted by Jeev himself. South Africa's Keith Horne secured his maiden Legends Tour title in stunning style with some great front-running at Bonanza Golf Club, near Lusaka. The nine-time Sunshine Tour champion opened the day with a three-shot lead and got off to a great start with three birdies in the first four holes. Eventual runner-up Adilson da Silva stayed on his tail as he made it to the turn in five-under-par for the day, —*PTI*

BCCI will decide on Shami playing against Aus: Shah

MUMBAI, 19 AUG

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah said that the decision on pacer Mohammed Shami's participation in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy away from home later this year will be taken after the report from National Cricket Academy (NCA). India fast bowler Mohammed Shami is making significant strides in his recovery from an ankle injury that has kept him out of cricket since the ODI World Cup last November. The expectation is that he will be ready to participate in India's home season, starting with a Test series against Bangladesh in September. Shami is currently in the final stages of his rehabilitation at the NCA in Bengaluru. Shah said to ANI, "Shami playing the Australia series or not is a matter of his fitness and a decision will be taken after the NCA report." —*ANI*

Nagal bows out of Winston-Salem Open

LONDON, 19 AUG

India's top singles player Sumit Nagal bowed out of the Winston-Salem Open, an ATP 250 event, after a straight set defeat against Borna Coric in the first round, here. Nagal lost 4-6, 2-6 to the Croatian player in one hour and 10 minutes. Nagal converted the only breakpoint he got in the contest while dropping his serve four times. In the doubles draw, former junior national champion Dhakshineswar Suresh will feature along with British partner Luca Pow. Dhakshineswar, who is in US College circuit, could not qualify for the singles main draw, falling in the second round of the qualifying event 3-6 4-6 to American fourth seed Learner Tien. —*PTI*

Priority is to improve quality of football: AIFF's new secy

Anilkumar emphasised the importance of improving FIFA ranking

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

All India Football Federation's (AIFF) newly-appointed secretary general Anilkumar on Monday said his top priority is to "improve the quality" of football in the country while involving each and every stakeholder, such as the FIFA, clubs, state associations and governments.

An experienced sports administrator, Anilkumar was welcomed at the Football House by the AIFF treasurer Kipa Ajay in the presence of deputy secretary general M Satyanarayan. "So, the priority will be the improvement of quality of football," Anilkumar, who took charge on Monday, told the AIFF website.

"I don't know how long we will take to make it at that level. But still we are starting with the hope that we can do something better. We will not give up until we succeed. "And along with you, all Indian football fans, we will continue to work across India with those who love football, who support Indian football," he added.

AIFF General Secretary Anilkumar is welcomed by Deputy M Satyanarayan and Treasurer Kipa Ajay on Monday PHOTO: AIFF

Anilkumar felt when the quality improves, the spectator turnout and viewership will improve, and the money will come to all areas of football. The newly-appointed secretary general said that though Indian football has been growing since many years, it may not have reached the expected level if one looks at FIFA rankings.

"So, we have a huge responsibility to improve that ranking. Our focus will be to work together with all the stakeholders to improve the quality of Indian football and make it more acceptable at the international level. He said the federation will soon sit with all the clubs and investors for a discussion on the way forward, and will seek help from the state governments as well as the Centre. "The priority is always to improve in all areas, starting from the grassroots to the top division. We will sit and plan along with the club owners and investors. We will look for possible support from AFC and FIFA to study in detail, to understand where we are actually lacking. —*PTI*

Deepti shines as London Spirit lift maiden women's title

LONDON, 19 AUG

India all-rounder Deepti Sharma played a crucial role with both bat and ball as London Spirit lifted their maiden Women's Hundred title, beating Welsh Fire by four wickets in the final at the Lord's here.

Deepti snapped a wicket giving away 23 runs and then smashed a run-a-ball 16, including the winning six off Hayley Matthews, as the Indian and England's Charlie Dean jumped into each other's arms in celebration.

Two years ago, Deepti had controversially dismissed Dean after running her out at the non-striker's end during the third ODI against England in 2022, triggering a debate over the spirit of the game.

It was ecstacy for Deepti and despair for Dean that day but here the two were on the same side, engineering the maiden victory after chasing down a victory target of 116 in 98 balls.

PHOTO: X@MUNSIFDIGITAL

Besides Deepti, Eva Gray (2/26) and Sarah Glenn (2/17) snapped two wickets each, while Tera Norris (1/18) also chipped in with a wicket to restrict Welsh Fire to 115 for 8 in stipulated 100 balls, which was mainly built on the 41-ball 54 by Australia's Jess Jonassen. Heather Knight (24) and Danielle Gibson (22) also chipped in with useful contributions even as Shabnim Ismail threatened to derail the chase with figures of three for 24 in her 20 balls. —*PTI*

Onus lies on Vinesh to remain below weight limit: CAS

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has ruled that athletes will have to ensure that they remain below their weight limit and no exception can be provided under any circumstance, while giving reasons for its rejection of Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat's appeal against her disqualification from the Paris Olympics final.

An ad-hoc division of the CAS had on 14 August rejected her appeal against a gut-wrenching disqualification from the final for being 100gm overweight, a decision that evoked a sharp reaction from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

The CAS on Monday published a detailed decision, furnishing reasons why Vinesh's appeal was rejected. "The problem for the Athlete is that the Rules are clear as to the weight limit and are the same for all participants. There is no tolerance provided for – it is an upper limit. It does not even allow for the weight of the singlet. It is clearly up to an athlete to ensure that they remain below that limit," the CAS said.

Vinesh Phogat PHOTO: PTI

"There is no dispute that the Applicant was above the weight limit. She gave the above evidence clearly and directly at the hearing. Her case is that the amount of excess was 100g and that a tolerance should apply as this is a small excess and explicable for reasons such as drinking water and water retention, in particular during the pre-menstrual phase."

The 29-year-old Vinesh was disqualified on the morning of the women's 50kg freestyle final. —*PTI*

'We'll be drawing on Green, Marsh more against India'

MELBOURNE, 19 AUG

Australia Test captain Pat Cummins expects greater workload with the ball for all-rounders Cameron Green and Mitchell Marsh against India in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy this summer.

Cummins wants both the all-rounders to share the workload with the team's frontline pace attack in the gruelling five-Test series starting November.

"It's been huge (having the all-rounders). In some ways we haven't had to use them as much as we thought we would. Which is a great thing. The last couple of summers have been pretty light (with) quick Test matches," Cummins said at the launch of Play Cricket week.

"I suspect this summer might be a bit different at time. We'll be drawing on Cam Green and Mitch Marsh a bit more.

"Even someone like Cam basically started in Shield cricket as a bowler but hasn't had to bowl heaps in Test matches. Now he is a few years older, I think we will be leaning on him a bit more," he added. The 25-year-old Green has bagged 35 wickets at 35.31 in 28 Tests so far in his career.

"The first point is they (Green and Marsh) both absolutely make the top six on their batting alone which is a luxury," Cummins said.

"And with someone like Cam and Mitch we have six bowling options. It's a really nice thing to have. Top six should always make the team on their batting." "It's nice of them to say that, they'd never say it to my face," Cummins said.

"We're really lucky that Nathan Lyon bowls plenty of overs, so you don't necessarily have to have an all-rounder, but it makes a big difference to have that fifth bowling option. —*PTI*

PARALYMPICS 2024

Aim is to win GOLD with a new world record: Sumit

PAST RECORDS

2023 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
70.83 METRE

HANGZHOU ASIAN PARA GAMES
73.29 METRE

AWARDS

2021
KHEL RATNA AWARD

2022:
PADMA SHRI AWARD

NEW DELHI, 19 AUG

Tokyo Paralympics gold medalist Indian javelin thrower Sumit Antil wants to improve upon his world record in his bid to defend his title in the Men's F64 category at the Paris Paralympics Games.

Sumit, along with Bhagyashree Jadhav (shot put, F34 category) will be Indian flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the Paralympics Games to be held from August 28 to September 8, 2024.

He had set a world record thrice in the Tokyo Paralympics and won the gold medal with the best throw of 68.55 metres.

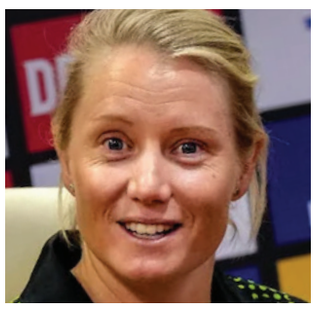
He bettered it with a new world record throw of 70.83 meters at the 2023 Para World Championships and further improved it at the Hangzhou Para Asian Games (2023) to win the gold with an effort of 73.29 metres.

F64 category deals with problems in Lower limb/s. Athlete competing with prosthesis affected by limb deficiency and leg length difference

"My long-term goal is to achieve a distance of 80 meters but in the Paris Paralympics, I will try to win the gold medal with a effort of 75 meters," the 26-year-old told PTI-Bhasha in an exclusive interview.

The athlete, who lost one of his limb in a road accident in 2015, won the gold medal at the Para World Championship in May this year with an effort of 69.50 metres. He said, "I have participated in very limited competitions. I have spent more time in practice. Competitions keep going on but my aim is to get a medal for India in the Paralympics and my entire focus has been on this for the last three years." —*PTI*

Playing B'desh T20 WC will be a challenge: Healy



Alyssa Healy PHOTO: PTI

SYDNEY, 19 AUG

Australia skipper Alyssa Healy has said it might not be right to go ahead with the women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh in October as it would put a lot of pressure on the country which is still recovering from the large-scale violence and protests that left hundreds dead.

The country's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India with Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus being made the chief of the interim government.

The women's T20 World Cup is scheduled in Bangladesh from 3-19 October with 10 teams, including defending champions Australia, competing in the event.

"I'd find it hard to fathom playing there at the moment, as a human being, I feel like it might be the wrong thing to do," Healy was quoted as saying by AAP on Cricket Australia.

Healy, however, said that the final call rests with the International Cricket Council, which is expected to make a decision this week.

Australia recently played a white-ball series in Bangladesh with all the six matches -- three ODIs and an equal number of T20Is -- being played at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka. —*PTI*

COMPLETE DOMINANCE

Billiards: Advani clinches grand double title

MUMBAI, 19 AUG

Ace cueist Pankaj Advani of ONGC extended his dominance on the green baize as he completed a grand double by winning the senior snooker title at the Western India Billiards and Snooker Championships 2024 here.

Advani, the proud owner of 27 world titles, showed steely resolve to shrug off a strong challenge from Railways' bespectacled cueist Kamal Chawla 6-4 in a long-drawn final that lasted close to seven hours at the Khar Gymkhana billiards hall on Sunday night.

Advani sealed his win with the frame scores reading 11-72, 31-58, 95-40, 52-42, 69-43, 43-74, 22-59, 75-62, 84-58, and 58-10. The Bengaluru-based Advani, who had earlier in the day defeated S Shrikrishna in the three-hour session billiards final, has now won seven consecutive titles (4 snooker and 3 billiards) in Mumbai over the past two years. The fare dished out by both champions was lacklustre and there was hardly much to cheer for the cue sports aficionados, who had made it to the venue with the hope of watching top-quality snooker. With both not showing the confidence to go for their shots, there were not too many substantial breaks and the frames took time to finish, which resulted in the match dragging on late into the evening.

Advani shows steely resolve to shrug off a strong challenge from Railways' bespectacled cueist Kamal Chawla 6-4 in a long-drawn final PHOTO: ANI

Advani for all his good showing produced just two breaks of 69 (3rd frame) and 55 (8th frame). In contrast, Chawla had breaks on 51 and 38 in the opening two frames followed by efforts of 61 (6th frame) and 40 (8th frame).

In the second semi-finals, Advani eased past Faisal Khan (Railways) 5-1 (131-0, 85-43, 82-53, 58-41, 59-83, 70-35). —*PTI*

Mike Tyson feels good, ready for his next bout

NEW YORK, 19 AUG

Mike Tyson is 58 years old and coming off a health scare that forced the postponement of his return to the ring.

The boxer once considered the most dangerous man in the world could be putting himself in danger by putting the gloves on again. Yet he was quick to respond Sunday when asked why he was going through with his bout against Jake Paul.

"Because I can. Who else can do it but me? Who else is he going to fight to make this happen?" Tyson said, motioning toward the crowd at a packed press conference where fans cheered the former heavyweight champion and booed Paul.

"We've just got to listen to the facts. We've got a YouTuber fighting the greatest fighter that ever lived."

Mike Tyson PHOTO: X@TMZ

Tyson and Paul restarted the buildup to their match that is now scheduled for November 15 at the home of the Dallas Cowboys in Arlington, Texas. They had been set to meet July 20 before Tyson became nauseous and dizzy on a flight from Miami to Los Angeles in May, with his representatives attributing the episode to an ulcer problem.

Tyson said on Sunday he resumed training two or three weeks ago and feels fine. "Hey listen, I'm just ready," Tyson said. —*AP*